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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

June 5, 1964

FROM: W. David Slawson

SUBJECT: Documents Received from the Russian Government: Legibility of Signatures

This afternoon I had a telephone call from Mr. Rocca of the CIA in response to my question a few days ago to him to find out about whether the illegibility of so many signatures other than the Oswalds on the Russian documents had any significance. He responded as follows:

He had taken my question up with the Russian experts. They reexamined all the signatures and concluded that about one in ten are legible. This is not at all out of the ordinary and in fact they think that 10% legibility in signatures is just about exactly what they would expect on Russian documents. Their experience is that Russians, especially Russian officials acting in their official capacity, sign and sometimes even write generally in a virtually unreadable scrawl. The reasons for this can of course only be guessed at but they seem to be tied up with the pressures of a police state. Rocca said that the principle reasons seem to be that it was some sort of symbol of prestige or power but that the tendency to not making a record of what one has done might also contribute.

Mr. Rocca said that unless I specifically requested it no formal conclusion on this query would be forthcoming. I told him that I would make a memorandum of this call and so far as I was concerned that was sufficient. He concurred.

cc: Mr. Rankin
Mr. Willens
Mr. Redlich
Mr. Slawson
Mr. Coleman
MailRoom Files

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